

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: January 27, 2015

Meeting #199

Project: 801 Eastern Avenue

Phase: Introduction

Location: Inner Harbor East

PRESENTATION:

Doug Schmidt of Workshop Development, also owners of the nearby Bagby buildings, opened the discussion of a proposed high rise mixed use project on the former Della Notte restaurant site at President Street between Eastern Ave and Fleet Street. He introduced architect Lee Driscoll of Hord Coplan Macht who described the initial plans for the project. The project would contain the following program elements:

1. Ground Level – two restaurants – one at President and Eastern Ave and another at Fleet and Abermarle Streets; the main residential lobby on President Street near Fleet; six 2 level townhouses facing President Street and two similar townhouses on Albermarle Street; service areas and grade level parking and ramps from Albermarle Street.
2. Parking Garage – approximately 7 levels with single loaded residential units facing President St, accessed from Albermarle St.
3. Residential Tower above – with approximately 8 additional levels, starting with a landscaped deck level above the garage structure.
4. Rooftop Amenity Level and rooftop swimming pool top off the project at approximately 194 feet or approximately 16 levels.

Driscoll commented on the challenges of the site, remarking that the design goal was to create a project that relates to its surroundings and is iconic as well, while providing as many residential units as possible with waterfront views. Designer Beret Dickson, described the project’s proposed massing and potential façade character. The idea of a horizontally layered, reflective glass façade was suggested to “mirror” the Public works museum/former power plant building across President Street. Faceted or deflected façade treatments at both corners were proposed.

Comments from the Panel:

The Panel expressed its great expectation and excitement regarding this potentially important “connector” site between Little Italy and Harbor East. Some disappointment was expressed that no alternative approaches were shared at this early stage. Although the Panel agreed with many practical aspects of the design logic and conclusions, there were several critical challenges voiced which deserve further study before moving into the schematic design phase. Those concerns were as follows:

1. **President Street Frontage** – The Panel questioned the introduction of 2-story “individual townhouse” development as the major base level façade along President Street, the most important of the three boundary streets and suggested that retail and or work/live units be explored to encourage more pedestrian traffic and commercial amenity for the residential units above. It was also suggested that President Street would create a more compelling residential address and that mid point along President Street might be preferred as the primary residential entrance with appropriate drop off, visitor and taxi opportunities.
2. **Reflective Glass Character** – Although the deflected façade treatment along President Street held some promise, the “sheer” nature of the mirror glass façade approach was challenged as being very office-like and would benefit from the introduction of some residential elements or relief through balconies and/or other materials.

3. **The Parking Garage** - It was suggested that the garage be lowered in deference to the surrounding Little Italy neighbors and that a façade treatment for the garage be explored that was compatible with the more intimate adjacent buildings.
4. **Overall Massing Approach** – More connection to surround context should be explored with the massing approach. References to adjacent building heights were presented but not founded in the massing approach and the long bar along President Street with only exposed parking massing along the community interface should be restudied.
5. **Street Façade Continuity** – It was suggested that the existing street façade planes along Eastern, President and Fleet Streets should be studied to provide some level of respect and continuity of those important edges.
6. **Long Residential Corridors** – The length of the residential corridors appeared to be excessive and uneventful. A suggestion was offered that a central (or dual core) scheme might be studied. If the apparently long corridors remain some type of mid point intervention at mid might be introduced that would also create some relief along the rear facade.

Panel Action:

Introduction only; no action. Recommend continuing development of schematic phase addressing the above comments.

Attending:

Doug Schmidt, Neil Tucker- Workshop Development
Lee Driscoll, Baret Dickson, Sharon Pula, Monica Roberston, Kendal Ahleberg - Hord
Coplan Macht
Michael MFume – Pbay
Natalie Sherman – Baltimore Sun
Kevin Litten – BBJ
Donna Beth Joy – Shapiro
Adam Bednar – The Daily Record

Dr. Meany; Messrs. Bowden*, and Burns - UDARP Panel
Director Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Tamara Woods, Alex
Hoffman –Planning Dept